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INFO RUEHAS/AMEMBASSY ALGIERS 6330
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S E C R E T NOUAKCHOTT 000471

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/21/2016
TAGS: [ASEC](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [ABLD](#) [CASC](#) [MR](#)
SUBJECT: MAURITANIA: EMERGENCY ACTION COMMITTEE MEETING
(EAC) THURSDAY, APRIL 20, 2006

REF: A. A. TD-314/27617-06
[1](#)B. B. TD/314-18637-06
[1](#)C. C. 12 FAH 6 H-113

Classified By: AMBASSADOR JOSEPH LEBARON, REASON 1.4 (B), (C), (D)

(S/NF) Key Points

-- Emergency Action Committee (EAC) met to discuss recent threats made by Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC), see references A and B, and efforts to mitigate or respond to those threats referencing.

-- Despite the lack of corroborating information, the EAC is carefully assessing the current security situation to mitigate the following: (1.) surveillance against AmEmbassy Nouakchott by posing as visa applicants to infiltrate a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device (VBIED) into AmEmbassy Nouakchott and detonate within the compound during the late morning hours inflicting maximum amount of casualties, (2.) surveillance on U.S. Ambassador, (3.) threat to kidnap and ransom western tourists traveling in and around the Adrar area of Mauritania.

-- EAC emphasized the need to strengthen specific security measures to include the implementation of more vigorous vehicle inspections to be reassessed after 30 days for those requesting access to the Embassy compound, reinforce personal security measures, mitigate vulnerabilities to the Ambassador, pass tear line information to host country, encourage personal security safeguards, query all prior visa applicants within a 90 day window beginning in March 15, 2006 and working backward, and consider implementing a warden message to warn tourists in the Adrar province.

END KEY POINTS.

[1](#)1. (S/NF) On April 20, 2006 at 1100 hours the Embassy's Emergency Action Committee (EAC) met to discuss recently obtained threat information which added specificity to previously acquired ambiguous information (reftels A and B). The threat suggested that GSPC teams have conducted surveillance operations under the guise of visa applicants in an attempt to infiltrate AmEmbassy Nouakchott with a VBIED and detonate within the compound during the late morning hours ensuring the maximum amount of casualties possible.

Further threat information also indicated separate GSPC teams were surveilling the Ambassador to monitor his habits and movements inside the country. Other information indicated a desire to kidnap western tourists driving sport utility vehicles in and around the area of Adrar.

¶2. (S/NF) EAC discussed the implementation of security measures to mitigate the aforementioned threats in accordance with a more rigorous interpretation of the policies and procedures outlined in 12 FAH 6 to cover: vehicle access and screening, personnel access and screening to include possible allowances to VIP,s, and mitigating the threats posed to the Ambassador.

¶3. (S/NF) The EAC agreed that vehicles will undergo a more comprehensive screening process prior to obtaining authorization for access to the compound. The EAC did note that Visa applicants are prohibited from entering the security zone that encompasses the embassy, and that any applicant attempting to enter would be stopped and turned away by host country National Guard personnel permanently assigned to protect the Embassy. However, visa applicants could park within proximity of the Embassy,s outer perimeter in an area controlled by the Spanish Embassy.

¶4. (SBU/NF) A vehicle inspection sally port with newly installed hydraulic barriers is nearing completion, however; technical difficulties have precluded commencing operations for the moment. However, upon remedying all of the deficiencies, and project certification, post will move its current vehicle screening to the new inspection area and dismantle the locally fabricated vehicle arrest system presently used at the former location.

¶5. (S/NF) EAC discussed means by which to ensure the Ambassador,s security without impinging upon his ability to conduct foreign policy. EAC agreed that further restricting access to the Ambassador,s schedule was warranted, lessening lead times to the media where their presence is sought, as well as making sure organizers of private events that seek the U.S. Ambassador,s attendance take an active role in arranging an appropriate level of security as a requirement for his attendance.

¶6. (S/NF) In addition to the threat tear line information that has been passed to host country security services, Mauritanian security officials continue to monitor the situation and are working diligently to mitigate these threats. The EAC recommended that the Foreign Ministry also be informed of the threat and of our efforts to counter the threat.

¶7. (SBU/NF) The EAC continues to stress to Embassy employees the vital importance that all employees take ownership of their personal security. The EAC has stressed to supervisors that they have a continuing responsibility to ensure that sufficient security precautions and practices are being adhered to by their subordinates. All employees are repeatedly encouraged to vary routes and times especially when traveling to and from work.

¶8. (S/NF) The EAC also agreed that the new, specific information regarding the possible kidnapping in the Adrar area of foreign tourists merited further attention. The Adrar region includes popular tourist locations such as the historic cities of Chinguetti and Ouadane, and the oasis, Terjit. The regional capital, Atar, hosts several hotels and travel agencies that cater to and organize groups traveling through the desert. There are nine PCVs in Adrar. The EAC determined that the information did not warrant limiting travel to Adrar or removing the PCVs from the area but did consider issuing a Warden Message.

¶9. (S/NF) Following the meeting, the Embassy received further information that the purported attackers were using a female LES as a witting or unwitting accomplice (Ref B). Embassy is taking immediate and appropriate steps to follow up on this latest information.

RECOMMENDATIONS

¶10. (S/NF) The EAC made the following recommendations:

- Immediately implement a more thorough screening of vehicles. (RSO)
- Bring new sally port on line as soon as possible. (Post, OBO, DS)
- Develop procedures for improved security for Ambassador during public events, and inform host government of the threat. (DCM, RSO, PAO)
- Conduct a detailed name check of names of all visa applicants who applied at the Embassy 90 days prior to the 15 March 2006. (CONS, RSO)
- Draft Warden Message for EAC consideration. (CONS, RSO)
- Interview selected LES to determine whether elicitation has occurred. (RSO)

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